THE STORY OF INDEPENDENT TELEPHONY

HARRY B. MacMEAL

FRANK N. HAROLD

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INDEPENDENT PIONEER
TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

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TO THE MEN
WHO HAVE GIVEN THE WORLD
THE FAR-FLUNG TELEPHONE

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FOREWORD

ABOUT the country in the years immediately preceding 1893, ambitious men were watching the ebbing life of the Alexander Graham Bell patents. For seventeen years the rich field of telephone utility had been surrounded by an unscalable wall—the patent laws of the United States.

The barrier fell in 1893 and 1894 and, while secondary lines of defense were persistently thrown up over a period of years, the way gradually was opened to the Independent telephone pioneers.

The fight was bitter. The Bell interests used the enormous resources of money and political power in an attempt to drive the Independents from the field. The Independents, quite naturally, used every resource to protect their investments.

The Independents were tenacious. They refused to be ousted. Slowly gaining ground—though many a time losing—from year to year they consolidated their positions until now they occupy a great place in the business world.

Conditions have changed. Duplication of service has mostly ceased. Great court battles are things of the past. The old bitterness has died out and scores of the mighty fighters of forty and thirty years ago are in their last sleep.

It is the writer's hope to present here a plain, understandable story of the beginnings of the Bell telephone, the origins and progress of Independent telephony, and a record of the achievements of the men who made so valiant a stand for freedom of operation in a vast utility field.

Valuable assistance in uncovering data on the Independent telephone movement and in the preparation of this book was given by E. F. Payne, a newspaper man of wide experience.